

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of manufacturing a fuel filler tube in a hydroforming dye having a cavity of a final configuration of the fuel filler tube, comprising the steps of:
  - a. cutting a blank to a desired length;
  - b. forming an intermediate preform having enlarged and constricted portions corresponding to enlarged and constricted portions of the fuel filler tube;
  - c. bending the intermediate preform if required to fit into the hydroforming dye; and
  - d. disposing the intermediate preform in the hydroforming dye and injecting the hydroforming fluid under pressure into the intermediate preform, to expand the intermediate preform to the final configuration.
2. The method of claim 1 in which step a. involves the sub-step of cutting a flat blank with wide and narrow portions corresponding to enlarged and constricted portions of the intermediate preform and step b. comprises the sub-step of rolling the flat blank into a tube.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the blank is formed from a plurality of different materials.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein step d. comprises the sub-step of inserting or retracting a pressurizing member in the hydroforming dye to control the length or wall thickness, or both, of the fuel filler tube.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the pressurizing member is a nozzle for injecting pressurized fluid during hydroforming.
6. A fuel filler tube produced according to the method of claim 1.